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***The Effect of Parents' Joint Work Schedules on Infants' Behavior Over the First Two Years of Life: Evidence from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Survey Birth Cohort (ECLS-B)***

We use the nine- and 24-month waves of the ECLS-B to test whether parents working nonstandard shifts during their child's first year has a lasting effect on child behavioral development—in this case, at the 24-month mark. We measure behavioral development by gauging the presence of regulatory problems. Regulatory problems, which include excessive fussiness, sleeping problems, and distractibility, have been found to predict subsequent problematic behavior.

We examine whether any negative effects of nonstandard schedules are mediated by the home environment, which includes parents' psychological well-being, quality of the parental relationship, and parent-child interactions. We extend previous research on shift work by taking various characteristics of fathers into account—an important consideration given that fathers spend more time with their children when they work opposite shifts from the mother.

We find that parents who work shifts at nine months have children with more regulatory problems even more than a year later. In somewhat of a departure from previous research, we find that shift work has a clear direct effect on behavioral development and that the home environment mediates only some of this link. We also find that fathers' psychological well-being and the extent of their interaction with their children affected child development. Our findings validate and expand the nascent literature on whether shift work influences child outcomes and on whether that effect persists later in childhood.